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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of college on self-actualization and self-concept of 125 black freshmen at Howard University. The sample included both regular and conditional students, the latter characterized by marginal academic skills. The report indicates that the sexes behaved differently on the examinations and that participation in a compensatory education program had a significant impact on female self-concept scores. It is also noted that students admitted conditionally suffered a decrease in their academic self-concept scores. Statistical tables are included. (WP)

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THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE ON BLACK FRESHMEN

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of college on self-actualization and self-concept of 125 Black freshmen at Howard University. The instruments used were the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), and the Brookover Academic Self-Concept Scale (BASC). The instruments were administered at the beginning and at the end of the first semester. Significant sex differences (males increased, females decreased) were found in both self-actualization and self-concept. The impact of group counseling was examined but the data supported no clear conclusion. Participation in a compensatory education program was found to have a possible beneficial impact on female self-concept scores. Finally it was noted that conditional admittance students suffered a decrease in their academic self-concept scores. Findings were discussed and a recommendation was offered.

Several authors have discussed the impact of college on Black freshmen. Howard (1974), studying alienation among Black compensatory education freshmen, found that initial sex differences in alienation (females more alienated) evened out after ten weeks; Howard also noted that neither group (males nor females) was affected by group counseling. In another study of compensatory education students, Olsen (1972) found that both Black males and Black females improved in their self-concepts-of-academic-ability as they changed from compensatory to regular student roles. Smith (1971) found no changes in self-concept among Black freshmen at southern and midwestern schools. Finally, Johnson (1978) studying students at Rutgers University noted that Black students reported more problems with college adjustment, and more stress with social adjustment than other groups of students; additionally Johnson reported sex differences in college and social adjustment problems.

Despite the apparent disparate nature of the subject matter reviewed above, the studies are all related to the impact of college on Black freshmen and to the purpose of the present study. The present study examines the impact of college on Black freshmen as well as factors which may influence this impact. Such factors, as seen in the above review, are participation in group counseling, participation in a conditional admittance program (compensatory education), and sex.

Specifically, the present study examines changes, in self-actualization, self-concept, and academic-self-concept in entering freshmen after one semester at Howard University.

PROCEDURE

Self-Actualization Measure- During the Fall semester of 1976, seventy-four regular students (38 females, 36 males) and forty-one conditional admittance (CA) students (23 females, 18 males) were administered the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1966). The CA students were students who had marginal SAT scores but were admitted under the condition that they participate in an academic reinforcement program. This program consisted of remedial classwork, study skills, and group counseling. The group counseling sessions were unstructured, co-leader sessions. The stated goal of group counseling was "to remove learning barriers". The groups met in 12 to 14 weekly sessions of 60 or 90 minutes each.

Each student completed the POI twice, once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. The regular student subjects were volunteer freshmen obtained during the freshman orientation assembly. No CA students were selected for this group. At the end of the semester the volunteers who had taken the POI during freshman orientation were offered $5.00 to take it again. All CA students were requested to complete both administrations of the POI. The POI's for the CA students were administered in the group counseling sessions at the beginning and at the end of the program.

The POI consists of two major scales - -

Inner Directedness (I) -

The extent to which one is independent and self supportive as opposed to dependent and seeking the support of others.

Time Competence (TC) -

The extent to which one lives in the present as opposed to the past or future.

A separate 3-way analysis of variance (repeated measures) was performed for each of the two POI scales. The independent factors were student type (regular -vs- CA), sex (male -vs- female), and test (pre -vs- post). A ".05" level of significance was accepted for this analysis.

Self-Concept Measure - During the Fall semester of 1977, forty-three CA students (27 females, 16 males) were administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) (TSCS) and the Brookover Academic Self-Concept Scale (BASC) (Brookover, 1964). As before, the students were administered a pre-test at the beginning of the semester and a post-test at semester's end. In this case, however, the students were randomly selected and were tested in their remedial classes. Also, due to a program change, only some of these students participated in group counseling. The data were gathered by Haines (1978) as part of another study. The data reported here were abstracted from a larger set of data with other variables used by Haines; the analyses used here were three-way (unweighted means) repeated measures analyses of variance (2X2X2). Independent factors used were sex (male -vs- female), test (pre -vs- post), and program (counseling -vs- non-counseling). Because of the relatively small sample size (one cell contained only 4 subjects), a ".10" level of significance was accepted here. Finally, only the total scale scores for the TSCS and BASC were studied.

RESULTS

Self-Actualization (POI) Scores- The cell means for the I and TC scores are shown in Table 1. Analyses for these scores are shown in Appendix Tables A, B, and C. Noteworthy findings from these analyses were as follows:

- Pre-test scores showed entering females to be more inner-directed than entering males. This was true for both regular and CA students.
- Pre-to-Post-test measures showed a significant decrease in inner-directedness among regular females and no change for regular males and CA students.

Self-Concept (TSCS) Scores - The cell means for the TCSC scores are shown in Table 2. Analyses for these scores are shown in Appendix Table D. Noteworthy findings from these analyses of TSCS scores were as follows:

- There were no differences between group counseling participants and non-participants.
- Females entered college with higher self-concept scores than did males.
- Pre-to-Post-test measures showed females decreasing and males increasing in self-concept.

Academic Self-Concept (BASC) Scores- The cell means for the BASC scores are shown in Table 3. Analyses for these scores are presented in Appendix Table E. Noteworthy findings from these analyses were as follows:

- In general, the CA students had higher academic self-concept upon college entry than at the end of one semester.

TABLE 1

Cell Means for Inner-Directedness (I) and Time Competence (TC) Scores: Howard Freshmen Sex by Type of Student by Test (Pre & Post)

Type of Student	POI Scale	Male		Female	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Regular	I	70.71	75.16	80.75	71.86
	TC	12.97	14.11	14.94	14.64
Conditional Admittance	I	74.89	72.67	79.91	82.09
	TC	15.06	14.28	15.83	15.22

TABLE 2

Cell Means for Tennessee Self- Concept (TSCS) Scores: Sex by Counseling Participation by Test (Pre -vs- Post)

Counseling Participation	Male		Female	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Counseling	335.25	351.75	352.67	342.08
NO Counseling	346.67	358.33	356.73	338.80

TABLE 3

Cell Means for Brookover Academic Self-Concept (BASC) Scores: Sex by Counseling Participation by Test (Pre -vs- Post)

Counseling Partcipation	Male		Female	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Counseling	44.75	39.0	43.83	41.92
NO Counseling	43.92	41.67	45.93	40.73

Discussion

Of the three factors examined here (sex, CA program, group counseling), only sex appeared to have strong influence on the impact of one semester of college. Regular female students showed a decrease in self-actualization (inner-directedness) and CA females showed a decrease in self-concept; regular males showed no change in self-actualization and CA males showed an increase in self-concept.

The only clue to the source of these findings was the further finding that CA females did not show the drop in inner-directedness noted with regular females. Considering definitions provided earlier, the drop in inner-directedness can be seen as a loss of some of the values and behavior associated with independence and self-supportiveness. It is possible that some facet of the CA program, such as group counseling, enabled female participants to maintain their entry levels of independence and self-supportiveness. This is not clear, however, since the self-concept data showed decreases for CA females with and without counseling.

A fair determination of what in the college environment was favorable to males and unfavorable to females cannot be made through this study. It can be suggested, however, that the problem may be in the college environment rather than the home environment. This suggestion is based on the fact that Black females arrived at college with higher levels of self-actualization and self-concept than males. The paucity of comparable data on Black students in other environments and colleges limits efforts to reconcile or generalize the findings reported here. One of the studies mentioned earlier, however, included data on Black students in other environments; this study reported no changes, after one year, in Black students enrolled in a southern Black college,

a southern White college, and a mid-western White college (Smith, 1971). Also, in a study of Whites sampled at a predominantly White school, Schroeder (1973) found that females scored higher than males in self-actualization on both pre and post tests. Thus, it appears that the present findings can at least be localized to ramifications for Black students attending an Eastern, urban university.

Another finding that bears mention is the decrease in academic self-concept in CA students. At Howard University, CA students become regular students after one semester. As mentioned earlier, Olsen (1972) reported an increase in academic self-concepts of Black CA students as they changed from compensatory to regular student roles. Regarding the present study, the self-concept measures were administered to the CA students immediately prior to their role changes. Thus, it is possible that the CA students in the present study may have had an increase in academic self-concept when they actually began the second semester as regular students.

Of concern here, however, is the decrease in academic self-concept during the first semester. A plausible explanation involves the impact of labelling. Upon college admission, CA students are labelled "academically deficient" and put into a special program. Thus, CA freshmen have the added burdens of adjusting to being in a special program. Such burdens could have a negative impact on the academic confidence of CA students. This explanation is supported by findings reported by Haines (1978) who noted positive reactions in both self-concept and academic performance among CA students who were given positive expectations of their academic experience at Howard University (e.g., they were not given negative labels). Thus, it appears that the drawbacks of labelling students can be remedied by appropriate and sensitive program handling by faculty and staff. Such handling, as implied by the Haines study, might include the establishment

of positive expectations among students and staff.

A brief final note should be made of the inconsistency in procedures used in administering the POI. The CA students were requested to participate while the regular students were volunteers and were paid for their participation on the post-test. The pattern displayed by the POI data was, for the most part, replicated by the self-concept (TSCS) data, which was not subject to procedure inconsistency. Thus, it appears safe to maintain the existing interpretation of the data.

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APPENDIX TABLE A

Analysis of Variance of Inner-Directedness Scores: Sex by Student Type by Test (Pre & Post)

Source	df	MD	F
S (Sex)	1	1465.32	9.80
T (Type)	1	400.55	2.68
ST	1	193.81	1.29
Error (Between)	111	149.45	
R (Test)	1	65.82	.46
RS	1	260.97	1.83
RT	1	63.02	.44
RST	1	1026.69	7.21**
Error (Within)	111	142.41	

** $p < .01$

APPENDIX TABLE B

List of Significant Simple Effects: Analysis of Variance of Inner-Directedness Scores

Source	F	Associated Means
Sex (CA students)	6.87*	Male: 73.78, Female: 81.00
Sex (Regular student, Pre-test)	5.37*	Male: 74.51, Female: 80.75
Test (Female, Regular students)	5.33*	Pre: 80.75, Post: 71.86
Sex (Pre-test)	4.80*	Male: 75.05, Female: 80.19
Type (Post-test)	4.97*	CA: 77.95, Regular: 71.64
Type (Post, female)	7.60**	CA: 82.09, Regular: 71.86

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

APPENDIX TABLE C

Analysis of Variance of Time Competence Scores Sex by Type of Student by Test (Pre and Post)

Source	df	MS	F
S (Sex)	1	57.99	4.22*
T (Type)	1	45.06	3.28
ST	1	2.06	.15
Error (Between)	111	13.75	
R (Test)	1	1.03	.12
RS	1	5.25	.59
RT	1	15.98	1.80
RST	1	8.42	.95
Error (Within)	111	8.90	

* $p < .05$

APPENDIX TABLE D

Analysis of Variance of Tennessee Self-Concept Scores, Howard Freshmen: Sex by Counseling Participation by Test (Pre & Post)

Source	df	MS	F
S (Sex)	1	3.05	< 1
C (Counseling)	1	364.97	< 1
SC	1	306.65	< 1
Error (Between)	39	1,228.74	
R (Tests)	1	.12	< 1
RS	1	3,323.82	4.01*
RC	1	153.55	< 1
RCS	1	6.55	< 1
Error (Within)	39	828.42	

* $p < .10$

APPENDIX TABLE E

Brookover Academic Self-Concept Scores, Howard Freshmen: Sex by Counseling Participation by Test (Pre and Post)

Source		SS	DF	MS	F
Between Subj.			42		
S	(Sex)	9.824	1	9.824	< 1
C	(Counseling)	7.821	1	7.821	< 1
SC		.877	1	.877	< 1
Error	(Between)	990.625	39	25.401	
Within Subj.					
C	(Tests)	236.371	1	236.371	11.105**
AC		.819	1	.819	< 1
BC		.058	1	.058	< 1
ABC		47.595	1	47.595	2.236
Error	(Within)	830.158	39	21.286	

** $p < .01$